# KALIDASA'S

# SAKUNTALA.

#### A

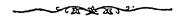
## METRICAL VERSION

ACT I & ACT II WITH AN INTRODUCTION).

BY

# HARINATH DE,

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#### Introduction.

A new translation of Sakuntala, when there are so many already in existence, calls for an explanation and the explanation is a very simple one. Sakuntala is a lyrical drama strongly resembling in tone and character Tasso's Aminta or Guarini's Pastor Fido-a fact which none of my predecessors in the field seem to have taken into consideration. Had they done so, they would have translated Kalidasa's dramatic masterpiece not in prose nor in blank verse nor again in blank verse mixed with prose, out in rhymed verse which alone is the adequate vehicle for representing romantic poetry in English. Again here is no satisfactory translation of Sakuntala in Inglish. Sir William Jones's version has long been out of date; that of Sir William Monier Williams is full of blunders and gives no better idea of the original than Mickle's Lusiad gives of Camoens's epic. In the preface to the revised edition of his version of Sakuntala, published n Sir John Lubbock's "Best Hundred Books of the World" the late Boden Professor of Sanskrit writes that he can honestly say that he did his best to make his epresentation of Kalidasa's immortal work as true and ustworthy as possible." But, unfortunately, he has verrated the merits of his own performance. I shall cite few instances to corroborate my statement. In the ologue to the Drama there occurs a beautiful song scribing the delights of the summer season which may literally translated as follows:-

"At present are days in which bathing in streams is delightful, in which the forest breezes are fragrant on account of their contact with patala flowers, in which sleep is easily brought on in the shade and the close of which is charming."

#### Or as Dr. Fritze has it :-

"Jetzt sind die Tage, da ein Bad erquickt,
Da Winde aus dem Walde lieblich duften,
Wenn dort Bignonienblüthen sie berührten,
Jetzt wird der Schlaf in Schatten leichtgefunden,
Und wonnevoll sind jetzt die Abendstunden."

#### Monier Williams renders :-

"Unceasing are the charms of halcyon days, When the cool bath exhilarates the frame, When sylvan gales are laden with the scent Of fragrant Patalas; when soothing sleep Creeps softly on beneath the deepening shade, And when, at last, the dulcet calm of eve Entrancing steals o'er every yielding sense."

Take again another passage in which the Hermit remonstrates with the King for the latter's trying to discharge a shaft on the body of a tender fawn:—

"Let not, let not, indeed, that arrow be discharged on the tender body of a fawn, like fire showered on a heap of flowers. How great is the difference between the exceedingly sensitive life of an innocent fawn and your feathered steel-head arrows! Therefore be pleased to put back your well-aimed arrow. Those arms are meant for protecting sufferers and not for tormenting the innocent."

These lines are exquisitely rendered by Hirzel, who prefers the reading tulá-ráçau ('a heap of cotton') to the ordinary pushpa-ráçau ('a heap of flowers'):—

"O wie doch, o wie?
Der Pfeil da für sie?
Er wurd ein Feu'r in Wollenballen,
Anf an ten Hindian-Leib ju fallen!

#### Sakuntala.

Der Hindinn Leben

Brzittert so sehr;

Dein spitzer Pfeil da

Verwundet so schwer!

O, so leg das Geschoss,

In den Köcher in Eil!

Ihr habt ja zum Schutze des Armen bloss,

Den Guten zu schädigen nicht, den Pfeil.'

# Monier Williams' rendering runs as follows:-

"Now heaven forbid this barbed shaft descend Upon the fragile body of a fawn, Like fire upon a heap of tender flowers, Can thy steel-head bolts no meeter quarry find Than the warm life-blood of a harmless deer? Restore, great Prince, thy weapon to its quiver. More it becomes thy arms to shield the weak, Than to bring anguish on the innocent."

Lastly, let us take the famous passage about the bee (Act I) that flew at Sakuntala's face. Dushyanta apostrophises the bee in lines of which the following is a literal rendering:—

"In whichever direction the bee turns towards the maiden, her rolling eye is darted in that direction. Bending her brows through fear, she is already learning coquettish-movements of the eye even through as yet she is uninfluenced by love. And thou, O bee, touchest repeatedly her quivering eye, whose outer-corner moves playfully. Going close to her ear, thou art softly humming as if whispering a secret of love. Thou art drinking her lip that contains all the treasures of delight while she waves her hand. We, on the other hand, O bee, in our enquiry into the truth of the maiden's origin are baffled, whereas thou indeed art lucky."

## Hirzels happily renders it :-

"Wohin, wohin immer das Bienchen sich bewegt Von da, von da fliehet die Lieblich-äug'ge weg: Bie lernt indem jetzt sie die Brauen bloss aus Furcht Zummmenzieht, ern auch von Angst das Augenspiels. () die du die Augen mit zitternden Winkeln Ihr streifest so lose,

In's Ohr ihr zu flüstern ein Liebesgeheimniss' In süssem Gekose;

Und während da jene versucht mit dem Händchen Dir immer zu wehren,

O die du ja dennoch die Lippen ihr trinkest, Das höchste Begehren!

Ach, immer im Suchen nach Wahrheit versunken Wo fänden wir Ruh?

Du aber, O Honigerzeugerin, dorten Wie selig bist du!"

#### Monier Williams renders :-

"Where'er the bee his eager onset plies
Now here, now there, she darts her kindling eyes,
What love hath yet to teach, fear teaches now,
The furtive glances and the frowning brow.
Ah happy bee! how boldly dost thou try
To steal the lustre from her sparkling eye;
And in thy circling movements hover near,
To murmur tender secrets in her ear;
Or, as she coyly waves her hand, to sip,
Voluptuous nectar from her lower lip!
While rising doubts may heart's fond hopes destroy,
Thou dost the fulness of her charms enjoy."

Numerous other examples can be cited to show that Monier Williams has not been fortunate in his attempt to present Sakuntala in an occidental garb. The best translation of Sakuntala in any European language is that by Professor Dr. Ludwig Fritze of Köpenick. I have followed Professor Fritze's example in taking Professor Pischel's edition of the Bengali recension of the drama as my text. Occasionally I have ventured to correct Professor Pischel's text as will be seen from the footnotes to my version of Sakuntala. I agree with Professor Pischel in regarding

the Bengali recension as the original form of the text of Sakuntala.

I have differed from the learned German translator whose name I have just now mentioned in my interpretation of the following passages:—

# (1) Act I. (Ed. Pischel p. 23.)

Dushyanta rises up as if desirous of holding Sakuntala back and then restrains himself saying:—

" Aho ceshtâ-pratirûpikâ kâmino manovritti,"

#### Professor Fritze renders :-

"Ach, wie doch bei Liebenden Das Denken steht in Einklang mit des Körpers Bewegungen."

Monier Williams entirely misses the point and renders this as:—

" Ah! a lover's feelings betray Themselves by his gestures."

But the real and correct meaning and one that suits the context is:—

"The thoughts of a lover correspond to what he wishes to do.

#### Or in the words of Lope de Vega:-

"Muchas veces piensa amor Que hace lo que imagina."

## I have rendered it accordingly:-

"How the mere thought comes to be A moment's rapt reality In a lover love-oppressed!"

Professor Pischel regards this explanation to be the correct one.

# (2) Act 11. (Ed. Pischel p. 38.):-

The beautiful stanzas in which Dushyanta describes Sakuntala's beauty by similes, contain the following expressions:—

"Anâmuktam ratnam . . . . akhandam punyanâm phalam."

#### Monier Williams renders them :-

"A gem of priceless water just released
Pure and unblemished from its glittering bed.!
Or may the maiden be compared..... to the mellowed fruit
Of virtuous actions in some former birth
Now brought to full perfection?"

#### Professor Fritze's translation runs:

"Die Perle, die noch nicht zum Schmuck gedient...
Die ganze, volle Frucht der guten Werke."

The Sanskrit is rather ambiguous but the context settles the meaning. Sakuntala is compared to 'a gem as yet unworn' and to 'a fruit reserved for pious deeds.' In other words, union with the peerless maiden is regarded as the reward of pious deeds performed in an anterior birth by the man who is destined to win her: Monier Williams is quite mistaken in interpreting the expression as referring to the beauty of Sakuntala, which he supposes the poet to regard as the fruit of the pious deeds done by the maiden in her former birth. I translate the lines in question in the following manner:—

"This fair gem
That none yet wore as ornament.
This reserved fruit
For pious deeds in past lives done-"

The idea is not uncommon in Indian literature. A lover's song, in the Dighá Nikáya which is quite as old as the fourth century B.C. contains the very same idea:—

"Yam me atthi katam punnam asmim puthuvi-mandale Tam me sabbanga-kalyānī tayā saddhim vipaccatam." "Yes, whatever deeds of virtue in this world were done by me, All their fruits, supremely blest one, may I reap with only thee."

In conclusion, I beg leave to repeat that my version follows the text of the Bengali recension as edited by Professor Pischel. I shall feel very grateful if my readers would inform me of any errors which they may detect in my translation. The remaining acts will follow in due course.

HARINATH DE.

Imperial Library,

March 28th, 1907.

# SAKUNTALA.

# Introduction.

#### Benediction.

Iså\* your protector be!

Whom in eight forms clear we see—
In the first of all creations,†
In the carrier of oblations,‡
In the sacrificing priest,
In the orbs of night and day,
In ether which doth sounds convey
All-pervading, and in air
Which gives breath to man and beast,
And in earth which sages all
Womb of things created call.
Isá keep you in his care!

[After the Benediction.]

Actor.

Why waste more words?
[Looking towards the tiring-room.]

<sup>•</sup> lsá—(i. e. the Lord) is one of names of Sivá—the favourite divinity of Kalidása. Sivá is regarded as a god endowed with eight forms vix: that of the five elements (earth, fire, air, water, ether), of the sun, the moon and the sacrificer.

<sup>†</sup> i. c. water.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. fire.

My lady sweet !.
When your dressing is complete
Will you kindly come this way?

[Enter Actress]

Actress.

Here I am ! What hest, I pray?

Actor.

Lady lo I to-day we meet
Before a learned throng, to play
Sakuntalá, a drama new
By Kalidás, so each must pay
To his part attention due.

Actress.

What can e'er be found amiss In the parts assigned by you?

Actor - [Smiling.]

Lady, the real truth is this:—

"I never praise the actor's skill
Till the learned him applaud;
E'en the best trained actor will
With doubt and diffidence be awed."

#### Actress.

Right ! But what must I now do ?

#### Actor.

Charm but the hearing of this throng ! 30

#### Actress.

And for the subject of my song What season shall I choose?

#### Actor.

For that this season—'tis but young— Summer sweet, the time of joy.

Summer sweet, the time of joy.
"To bathe in streams what joy divine!
When sylvan gales waft scents from flowers.
To sleep invite the shady bowers
And grateful is the day's decline."

#### Actress-[Sings.]

"With ruthful fingers damsels twine Sirisha-blossoms† round their ears, 40 Velvet-tipped their fibres fine, Flowers which bee's soft kiss endears."

#### Actor.

Charming! Your enrapturing song Spell-bound holds this listening throng. Picture-like they gaze! What play To please them shall we act to-day?

The text has "patala-flowers" (i. e. Bignonta suaveolens.)
The flowers of Acacia Sirisha were used by Indian ladies as a companients. See Act I, line 459 of my translation.

# Actress.

Noble sir, why not that same Which had first allured your thought? Sakuntalá 'tis called by name. Let us act it.

#### Actor.

Thanks! I had forgot. 50.

"O Lady, my spirit was ravished away,
So deep did your music enrapture my ear
Even as Dushyanta wanders astray
Pursuing a fleet-foot antelope here."

[Exeunt.]

[Here ends the Introduction.]

#### Scene-A Forest.

Enter King Dushyanta armed with a bow and arrows in a chariot and chasing an antelope, attended by his charioteer.

#### Charioteer

[Looking at the deer, and then at the King]:—My liege,

Your bowstring drawn when I behold
And gaze upon the speckled deer,
How Siva chased that deer of old,
Methinks, I see in vision crear.

#### King.

O charioteer, this speckled fawn

Far from our pathway hath us drawn.

How graceful, see, his neck is bent,

As momently he turns his glances

Towards my chariot's swift advances,

While, fearful of my shaft's descent, 10

His forelimbs, lo, still onward hieing

He draws within his haunches, strewing

The road with grass he had been chewing,

<sup>\*</sup> Siva not being invited to Daksha's sacrifice, was so indignant that he confounded the sacrifice, dispersed the guests and chasing Yajna the God of Sacrifice who fled in the form of a deer, overtook and decapitated him.

Which from his panting mouth keeps flying. Look! Look! Again from earth upspringing He seems to be in mid-air swinging.

[With astonishment.]

Scarce possible to keep, indeed, Within sight, swift though I pursue!

Charioteer.

Since full of hollows is this ground,
O King, the reins I tightly drew,
And slackened thus the chariot's speed.

Therefore is the distance found Great, betwixt us and the deer.

But now on level earth we stand! It cannot long elude you here.

King.

Let loose the reins, then, charioteer.

#### · Charioteer.

I'll do, my liege, as you command. But look! O look!

. [Drives the chariot at full speed.]
The reins they are loosened, the steeds they career.

As though they endured not the speed of the deer-

Their forelimbs are strained, the *chowries\**that make

The crests on their head-gear seem scarcely to shake. 30

a decoration formed of the white bushy tail of the yak.

40

Their ears they keep stealy, on speed they ungrazed

E'en by an atom of dust they have raised.

King-[Joyfully.] .

Methinks the coursers in their speed
Outstrip the Sun's or Indra's\* steed.
For now what small is looms like great;
Now what is parted seems like one;
What crooked is, now seemeth straight;

So swiftly doth my chariot run
That not a thing can now appear
To my eyes or far or near.

A voice behind the scenes.

Forbear, O king, to kill this deer Owned by the hermitage.

Charioteer.

[Listening and looking round]

I ween

Two hermits, lord, have come between Your arrows and your wish'd-for prey.

King

[Hastily.]

Pull up the reins, then, charioteer.

Charioteer.

To hear, O king, is to obey.

TStops the chariot.

The Jupiter of Hindu mythology.

# [Enter a hermit and two others with him.]

#### Hermit

## [Raising his hand.]

Here me, O noble king, this deer
Comes from our hermitage. From frame
So tender, pray, avert your showers
Of arrows. Were it not the same 50
To pour hot flames on a heap of flowers?
To think that a feather'd steel-head dart
Should transfix a gentle hart!
'Twere better, sure, your arrows went
Back to their quiver. Those arms are meant
To champion sufferers, not to torment
The creatures that are innocent.

#### King

[Bows to the hermits.]

Look I replace it.

[Replaces the arrow in its quiver.]

#### Hermit.

Rightly done

Of one who is the shining sun
Of Puru's\* race. A son of worth
Unmatch'd—be yours to rule this earth!

Dushyanta was sixteenth in descent from Puru, the most famous

#### King.

[Bowing.]

Thy priestly blessing I accept.

Hermit.

We have come hither to collect
Fuel, O king. The mighty sage
Kanwa hath his hermitage†
Yonder on Malini's bank; and here,
O King, so it not thwart your sphere
Of purpose, enter and take rest,
Enjoy the honour of a guest.
And when you see the hermit's rite
Performed unhindered, you will know
What safety spreads that hand of might
Scarred by drawing oft the bow.

#### King.

The holy sage—abides he there?

#### Hermit.

To Sakuntala, his daughter fair,
Injunctions hath he given to treat
Guests that come with welcome meet.
As for Lord Kanwa, he is gone
To Somatirtha§; thither drawn
By a deep longing, some dark fate
That threats her, to propitiate.

<sup>†</sup> I regard the words between 'Kanvasva' and 'anumalinitiram' as a gloss and therefore do not translate them.

A right hand tributary of the Ganges at some distance from Delhi.

<sup>5</sup> A holy place somewhere near the modern Panipat.

#### King.

O Hermit, if it should be so, I'll see her and, I do believe, From her the sage will come to know Of my devotion.

#### Hermit.

Sire, our leave We take now.

[Exit with his two companions.]

King.

Urge the horses on.

A visit to this holy seat
Will make us holier.

Charioteer.

I obey.

[Drives the chariot very quickly.]

King.

[Looking all about him.]

O charioteer, though none did say So much, 'tis surely clear as day That this our chariot now doth move In precincts of the penance-grove.

90

#### Charioteer.

How learnt you? Tell me, I entreat.

#### King.

Dost thou not 'neath you trees behold Grains of the wild rice scatter'd? Methinks, have dropt from holes in trees Which the parrot-lineage hold. Scatter'd also round about Oil-smear'd stones I seem to see. Such as from fruits of ingudi\* 100 Are used to press their kernel out. Again, observe those herds of deer, How heedless roam they near and far, And brook the rattling of our car, Because their heart is void of fear. Drops of water from the bark,† The hermit's vesture, oozing mark With streaks the paths by which they bring Water from the liquid spring. 110 Channels, 1 see, there are that lave The roots of yonder trees, Of which every little wave Is rippling in the breeze, While chequered seems each tender spray Thanks to the fumes that rise, From melting butter duly thrown On flames of sacrifice.

<sup>•</sup> A tree, known also as the Anchorite's tree (tapasataru) from the fruit of which oil was extracted, which hermits used for their lamps and for ointment.

<sup>†</sup> i. e. Dresses made of barks were worn by hermits.

i. e. Trenches dug round the roots of trees to collect water.

And, see, there are young fawns at play
Within the penance-grove,
As if their hearts had never known
A fear, o'er lawns, from which is mown
The sacred grass, they rove.

120

Charioteer.

I understand.

King.

[Advancing a little further.]

I pray thee, stay

The chariot here, where I'll descend, So that no rude disturbance may The dwellers of the grove offend.

Charioteer.

[Stops the chariot.]

I hold the reins in, King, alight.

King.

[Alighting.]

O charioteer, it is not right
To enter penance-groves with aught
But humble garments. Therefore, hold
The bow and vestures which I brought.

130

[Delivers his dresses and bow to the charioteer.]

And by the time I shall retrace

My footsteps from the grove, pray see

The steeds are bathed.

140

#### Charioteer.

Even as told,

My liege, your hest perform'd shall be.

[Exit.]

#### King.

[Walking and looking about.]

I'll enter now. This seems the place.

[Entering and feeling a throbbing sensation in his arm.]

Purest peace this spot doth sway;

What means my right arm's throbbing still?\*\*

How can this hermit-grove fulfil

The joy this throbbing bodeth? Nay,

Everywhere Fate finds a way

To work, whene'er it may, its will.

A voice behind the scenes.

O this way, friends!

King.

[Listening.]

I hear a talking Towards the south of yonder glades, And thither do I purpose walking.

[Walking and looking about.]

But look! Here come the hermit-maids A-watering trees. Each carries weight Proportion'd to her frame—a jar.

A quivering sensation in the right arm is supposed to prognosticate union with a beautiful woman.

# [Gazing at them.]

Heavens! Of what graceful form they are!

If such peerless beauty, rare

Even in palaces, here dwell,

Forest-blossoms, I declare,

Would the garden's growth excel.

So in this shadow let me wait.

[Stands gazing at them.]

[Enter Sakuntala with her two female companions, employed in the manner described.]

#### Sakuntala.

This way, O friends, pray, come this way.

#### Anasuya.

O Sakuntala, hear me, pray,
Dearer far, it seems to me,
Those trees unto your father be
Than your dear self, my dear; for, though
You are more tender than fresh-blown
Jasmine-flowers, why hath he so
Task'd you to fill with water these
Basins at the roots of trees?

#### Sakuntala.

'Tis not my father's hest alone.

I too such love towards them bear
As they my own dear brothers were
Or sisters.

[Continues watering the shrubs.]

#### Anasuya.

We have given their share
Of water to the trees that bend
With summer-flowers. Let us pour
On trees whose flowering time is o'er
Some water now; for boon that's given
Without a thought of guerdon, friend,
Is pleasing most unto high Heaven.

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#### King.

Is this Sage Kanwa's child? Ah me!
Hard-hearted must sage Kanwa be
Upon her tender limbs to press
Rude bark of the hermit-dress.
For he who wishes to inure
To penance such a beauteous frame,
Which least adorned doth most allure,
Such a one may well endeavour
With blue lotus-leaf to sever,
The obdurate acacia's stem.\*

Well! hiding now behind the trees
L'll watch her unabashed at ease.

180

I'll watch her unabashed at ease.

# [Conceals himself.]

O Anasuya, I am pained
By this bark-vesture which the hands
Of Priyamvada have fastened. Friend,
I pray thee, loosen thou these bands.

[Anasuya loosens them.]

The Sami tree (Acasia, Suma) the wood of which is very hard, is supposed by the Hindus to contain fire.

#### Priyamvada,

(Smiling.)

Rather blame that budding youth Which your ripening breast expands.

190

# King. Well says the hermit-maid, in sooth.

Her bosom since bark-vestures hide

Pinned o'er her shoulders and up-tied. Her young shape not one grace reveals; So a yellow leaf the flower conceals. But e'en though clothes of bark may be Unsuited to her youth, yet they Adorn her all as splendidly As silks or gems or trinkets may. 200 For though she float 'mongst weeds\*, that flower, The lotus, keeps her beauty's dower, And the moon's spots, though dark enhance The lustre of her countenance: So to this maiden doth her dress Of bark give greater loveliness. To forms that loveliness present What may not serve as ornament?

#### Sakuntala.

[Looking before her.].

Methinks that yonder kesar† tree

Beckons with waving leaves to me.

210

Missussest slengi-a tree which looks very ornamental in pleasure-

<sup>•</sup> i.e. the Saivala (Vallisneria) an aquatic plant which spreads itself over goods, and interweaves itself with the lotus.

Which, as the gentle breezes blow Betwixt them, look like fingers;\* so I'll go and tend it.

[Walks towards it.]

Priyamvada.

O dear friend, Prithee, just there one moment bide.

Sakuntala.

Wherefore?

Priyamvada.

With you at his side, That kesar tree appears to blend As with a creeper's graceful frame.

Sakuntala.

[Smiling.]

Ah! •Thus thou didst obtain, forsooth, Sweet speaker, thine own lovely name Priyamvadá.†

#### King,

Sweet speech but truth. 220
As the sprouting leaves her lips are red,
As the lithe bough is her either arm,
Like the bloom in a flower does youth spread
Through her sweet limbs a luring charm.

o Cf. Wordsworth :- " The budding twigs spread out their fan de."

<sup>† &#</sup>x27;Priyamvada means 'Sweet Speaker.' † I read 'priyam ap tathyam aha."

#### Anasaya.

Sakuntala, 'tis here, O see, That jasmine. She the mango-tree Elected for her spouse and thou Named'st her Forest Moonlight?

#### Sakuntala.

[Approaching the plant and looking ut it.]

Now.

How glad a season they have chose For their sweet union! For, behold, The Forest Moonlight doth unfold Her youth in flowers. The mango-tree Drest in new leaves, doth seem to me Fresh for enjoyment.

[Continues gazing at it.]

#### Priyamvada.

Dost thou know Anasuya, why she gazeth so Fixed on the Forest Moonlight?

#### Anasuva.

No.

I know not. Prithee, friend, disclose. Priyamvada.

Within her heart of hearts she saith :--"As the jasmine weds the mango-tree, Him may I wed who merits me."

230

#### Sakuntala,

There, girl, thy own thought spoke, in faith, [Continues watering the trees.]

#### Anasuva.

Sakuntala, hast thou forgot
This madhavi\* that with such care
As thee did our own father rear?
'Tis here.

#### Sakuntala.

O friend, I would as soon

Forget myself.

[Going to the plant and looking at it with joy.]

A boon, a boon, .

For wondrous tidings I have brought.

#### Priyamvada,

What is it? Tell me, I implore.

#### Sakuntala.

Though now the season is no more, You, sweet creeper, doth from root To top with blossoms burgeon o'er.

#### Anasuya and Priyamvada.

[Quickly going to the creeper.]

True! True!

#### Sakuntala.

What see you now, my friends?

A beautiful creeper.

#### Priyamvada,

(Smiling.)

I soon shall tell you what portends This, when in marriage tied you'll be.

Sakuntala.

(Angrily.)

You do transfer your wish to me. Privamvada.

I am not jesting. I learnt this From father. Your connubial bliss. My friend, it bodeth, past dispute.

Anasuya.

Prithee just look, how lovingly Sakuntala doth water now The creeper's root.

Sakuntala.

Why should I not?

As my own sister from time past I have regarded it.

(Continues watering it.)

King.

0 how

I wish that it may prove her lot Mothered to be of other caste \* To Kanwa's! Nay, away with doubt!

In that case Dushyanta being of the warrior-caste could marry her.

The warrior caste could not marry a girl born of a brahmin and a brahmin mother.

Sure, with us warriors she can wed; Seeing, for her my heart doth yearn. The promptings of the good, 'tis said, The scale in dubious matters turn. The truth, the truth I shall find out.

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#### Sakuntala.

(In a flurry.)

Help! From the jasmine-flowers a bee Is flying at my face.

[Attempts to drive it away.]

King.

[Gazing at her ardently.]

Ah me!

For wheresoe'er the bee now flies,
The maiden turns her fluttering eyes,
Though she's a stranger yet to love,
Already her swift terrors move,
Their pupils, as in coquetry.

(In a tone of envy.)

And thou art happy wandering bee,
For while I wretched do assay
Her birth to fathom, thou dost stray
Touching her dear eyes momently,
The edges of whose lids do quiver;
Since terror of thee ne'er doth leave her,
And as thou hoverest past her ear
A-humming, thou therein dost pour

Love's secrets, while the maid in fear Waves her hands, and thou dost sip Love's summed essence in her lip.

#### Sakuntala.

O! from this plague deliver me!
Anasuya and Priyamvada.

290

# [Smiling]

Deliver you? Ah, how can we? Call Dushyanta to your aid. 'Tis he protects each hermit-glade.

# King.

Now is the time for me to show

Myself to them. Why should I fear?

[Checks himself when the words are half-uttèred. Aside.]

But stay! That will but make them know My rank. Let be! I'll pass for guest New come.

#### .Sakuntala.

[Moving a step or two further off.]

The monster will not rest.

To shun him elsewhere I must go.

Again he comes to me. Help! Ho!

300

# King.

[Advancing hastily]

When the great son of Puru sways
The earth and Mischief curbs her ways,
Who, who is this Presumption aids

To harm the harmless hermit-maids?

[All look at the King and are embarrassed.]
Anasuya

'Twas nothing serious. This our friend

[Points to Sakuntala.]

Was by a wicked bee distressed.

King.

[ Turning to Sakuntala. ]

I hope your penance gloriously Doth prosper. \*

[Sakuntala stands confused and silent:]

# Anasuya

Yes, because a guest

So noble as yourself hath deigned A visit.

# Priyamvada.

Welcome, sir, and thou

310

Sakuntala, to cottage go, Bring fruits and bring too offerings meet. This water here will wash his feet.

# King.

Offerings plenteous to me Are your words so kind and sweet.

This is the regular formula of salutation addressed to hermits and

#### Anasuya.

May it please you, sir, to rest A little while upon this seat Beneath the *saptaparna\** tree Whose shade drops coolness

# King.

And you too

320

Must be for wearied with your task Of piety: so let me ask Of you to sit awhile.

# Priyamvada.

[ Aside to Sakuntala. ]

But, friend

Sakuntala, speak I aright?
Should we not our good guest attend?
Near him a seat let us then take.

[ All sit down together.]

# Sakuntala. [ Aside. ]

Ah me! What aileth me? The sight Of this new stranger, doth awake Emotions in me strange and new Ill-suited to a hermitage.

# King.

(Looking at all by turns.)
Delightful must your friendship be!
You are so like in form and age.

# Priyamvada.

[ Aside to Anasuya. ]

Who is this, Anasuya, pray,
So handsome, yet so dignified,
Whose courteous converse doth display
A sovereign majesty allied
With mildness?

#### Anasuya.

[ Aside to Priyamvada.]

I too, dearest friend, Am all as curious to know. I'll question him.

# (Aloud.)

Distinguished Sir!
So courteous are your words, they lend
Courage to question what high line
Of royal sages you adorn.
What country may your absence mourn?
And, pray you, tell us what could move
Your honoured self to undergo
Exposure and travail indign
In journey to this penance-grove.

#### Sakuntala.

# [Aside.]

O heart impatient, pull thou not Af me for atterance! For with nim, See, Anusuya doth confer Of that which laboured so thy thought. 340

# King. [Aside.]

What best to do now? Or betray
My person and my rank? Or hide
The knowledge from these maids? Let be I

( Aloud.)

Ladies, great Puru's progeny
I serve. The Vedas well I know.
'Tis mine o'er justice to preside
In the great city. Now I go
Journeying the holy places through,
So hither have I turned my way.

#### Sakuntala.

Then hermits may now live secure Under a guardian's watchful care.

360

[Sakuntula gazes bashfully at the King.]
Priyamvada & Anasuya.

[ Perceiving the state of her feelings and that of the

King. Aside to Sakuntala.]

If, Sakuntala my dear, Our father were now present here—

Sakuntala.

[Angrily.]

Well, what then?

Priyamvada & Anasnya.

He would not spare.

His life's best treasure, I am sure,

To honour this distinguished guest.

#### Sakuntala.

# [Angrily.]

Away! What's brewing in your heart? I will not hear.

# King.

Will you impart,

Ladies, some news about your friend?

# Anasuya.

Favoured we feel by this request.

370

#### King.

A life ascetic wedlock-free

Hath Kanwa led unto this day;

Her father—how then can he be?

#### Anasuya.

Nay, good Sir, doth not one live A king-born sage of puissant sway, Who doth from Kusa's race descend?\*\*

### King.

There lives one. What of him? I pray.

#### Anasuya.

'Twas he, this maiden here begot.

To Kanwa, for the care he's taken
In rearing her a babe forsaken,
A father's name our friend doth give.

380-

i.e. The great sage Visvamitra (great-grandson of Kusika or Kusa) who raised himself by his austerities from the warrior caste to that of

### King.

"A babe forsaken"—wonder-fraught And strange your tale is. So her lot From its commencement let me hear.

# Anasuya.

You shall, good Sir. In time long past
That mighty sage of regal caste
Practised austerities severe—
Acts at whose awfulness no god
But trembled stricken with alarm.
To interrupt his aim, I hear,
Fair Menaka, a nymph, they sent.

390

# King.

Yes, I know, the gods are awed Ever to see us mortals bent. On such penances austere. † What followed next?

# Anasuya,

The sweet, sweet Spring Was come and he stood marvelling At her inebriating charm.

# King.

I guess the sequel. She, 'tis clear, Was of that nymph born.

# Anasnya.

Just so, sir,

Penances are cheques which the gods must endorse"-Southey.

#### King.

Surely, none else could mother her.

To such a radiant thing of light.

Could aught that's mortal e'er give birth?

The lighting's flash that quivereth bright

Rises not from under earth.

[Sakuntala remains modestly seated with down-

cast eyes.]

Now, may my longings be fulfilled.

# Priyamvada.

[Looking with a smile at Sakuntala and then turning towards the King.]

Methinks, more knowledge you desire.

[ Sakuntala makes a chiding gesture with her finger. ]

#### King.

O lady, rightly have you guessed, From eagerness to hear of great And noble lives, I shall request, You tell me what I would enquire.

410

# Priyamvada.

Pray, Sir, do not hesitate. We're hermitesses and may be Questioned unreservedly.

#### King.

Must she observe the hermit-vow, Which balks the Love-god's arrows now, Until her sire this maid bestows
If marriage? Or must her sweet days
For ever mate her with shy does
Belov'd of her, because their gaze
Such beauty as her own displays?

420

# Priyamvada.

Unto this day, Sir, hath our friend The strict life of a hermit led. But the sage Kanwa doth intend She should a worthy husband wed.

# King.

[Aside.]

Cherish, O heart, thy dear desire; From doubts henceforward thou art free. What to thee once burned a fire, Shines a gem that touched can be.

#### Sakuntala.

[ Pretending to be angry. ] • I must hie hence.

# Anasuya.

Ah! wherefore, dear? Sakuntala.

To bring to Dame Gautami's ear What nonsense Priyamvada speaks here. 430

#### Anasuya.

Sakuntala, it is not fit For hermitesses thus to quit

She is the Mother Superior of the female section of this society of

440

Wilfully a noble guest Ere we give him welcome meet.

[Sakuntala moves away without answering a word.]

King.

[ Making a movement to arrest her departure, but checking himself. Aside.]

Ah! whither doth the maiden stray? How the mere thought comes to be A moment's rapt reality
In a lover love-oppressed!†
For though now I burned to go After her sweet footsteps, I Checked by grave propriety
Did my forward movement stay.
Yet, it seems as though my feet
Those few steps with her did hie
And came back with her.

[ Holding Sakuntala back. ]

Anger'd so,

You must not be; for sure, no gain 'Twould bring you, thus to go away.

(Frowning.)

What mean'st thou?

Friend, to me you owe

Two waterings. First, pay off that debt: 450 Then go, wherever you are fain.

<sup>†</sup> This is the only interpretation of the difficult passage which seems consistent with the lines that follow. Professor Pischel thinks my interpretation to be the correct one.

# [Forcing her to turn back.]

Tired must the gentle maiden be
Watering her trees; for do but look!
Her shoulders droop and both her arms
Glow with exertion lifting oft
The water jar. Her bosom soft
Doth with her quick breath palpitate.
Her face too is bedewed with sweat,
That mars the sirisha-pendant's\* charms.
A straying lock, whose fillet-band
Hath dropt, she holds up with one hand.
From that debt now I'll set her free.

**46**0

[Offers a ring to Priyamvada. Both the maidens, reading the name 'Dushyanta' on the seal, look at

each other with surprise. ]

Nay, maidens, do not suffer me For this ring's lord to be mistook. It is a present from my King.

[Returning the ring to Dushyanta.] You must not part then with the ring. Freed by your mere desire is she,

( To Sakuntala.)

And since our good guest—or indeed Shall I say, prince?—doth intercede On your behalf, I shall forego Strict payment of the debt you owe. So whither would you now away?

<sup>·</sup> See the last footnote on page 3.

#### Sakuntala.

(Aside.)

Were I but mistress of my will, I would not leave him.

# Priyamvada.

Tarrying still,

Sakuntala?

#### Sakuntala.

Thou dost forget I am no longer in thy debt.
To go where'er I wish, I'm free.

# King.

[ Gazing at Sakuntala. Aside]

Can it be, this maid so shy
Feels towards me even as I
Towards her. Be what will, my hope
That seemed so fruitless, findeth scope.
For, though she mix no speech with me,
She leans her ear attentively
To all I speak; though she not dare
To stay before my countenance,
Yet—I have marked her—doth forbear
On aught in chief to fix her glance.

A voice behind the Scences.

O hermits, haste to save the deer

That within your precincts dwell,

For, Dushyanta, we hear tell,

Doth a hunting hither near.

480

The dust-clouds that his horse-hooves raise Are red-gold in the sun-set's blaze, And down, like the swarming locust-flight, They do upon the trees alight, The trees upon whose branches dark Are hung the dripping robes of bark.

# King.

(Aside.)

Ah spite! My followers in their quest To find me do these groves infest.

#### A voice behind the Scenes.

An elephant, O hermits, come
Unto our holy forest-home,
Goes casting terror and doth roam
'Midst timorous women and among
Men too old and boys too young.
See, see, into the hermitage

The mighty elephant hath burst By the chariot terrified;

And his entrance hath dispersed
The timid deer that here abide.
An obstacle incarnate he
To our austerities doth rage.
Already one tusk he hath broke
Wherewith he dealt a mighty stroke
On his obstructor—a tall tree;
And he draggeth violently
Creepers that around him wind,
That his frame like fetters bind.

510

#### King.

# [ All rise up hastily. ]

Heavens! To these how base a part I play committing grievous wrong. There is no help. I must along To meet them.

520

530

# Priyamvada and Anasuya.

With fear-stricken heart, Good sir, these tidings do we hear. O permit us leave to take. To our cottage we will make Our way.

# Anasuya.

(To Sakuntala.)

Sakuntala my dear,

Dame Gautami for our sake Must in deep disquiet be. Do not let us stay apart Longer from her.

#### Sakuntala.

( Walking slowly )

Woe is me!
Numbed are my feet with lingering stay.

King.

Safely may you go your way, Ladies. 'Tis my care to see That no rude disturbance may Befall your hermitage.

# Anasuya & Priyamvada.

We pray
That you, sir, so supremely wise
Will not from us girls refrain
Your pardon for our incomplete,
Poor welcome. Humbly we entreat
That your noble self may deign
Us to visit once again.

540

#### King.

O, say not so. 'Tis honour great But your looks to contemplate.

#### Sakuntala.

Anasuya, look, I'm stung.

My foot a point of kusa\* grass
Has pierced as after you I pass.

And my dress has caught among
The brambly kuruvaka.† Please
Wait for me till I release
My garment.

[Exit with her two companions after making pretexts for delay to steal glances at the King.]

# King.

Ah is it then so?
All gone! Peace heart! I too will go. 550
Since first this maiden met my view,

i.e. Pos cynosuroides—a grass held sacred by the Hindus. Its leaves are very long and taper to a sharp needle-like point,

A species of Barleria prioritis covered with sharp prickles.

How slow my heart moves, O how slow,
Back to my city to return!
I have it! I my retinue
Will bid encamp them by this glade.
Ah me! Ah me! I cannot turn
From thinking of this hermit-maid.
As forward goes my body, so
Backward ever turns my mind,
E'en as the silken streamers go
Of banners borne against the wind.

560

[Exit King.]

(End of Act I.)

<sup>•</sup> Compare the opening lines of Thomas Moore's poem entitled "The Journey Onwards":—

<sup>&</sup>quot;As slow our thip her foamy track
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still look'd back
To that dear isle 'twas leaving."

#### Act II.

Scene.—A plain on the skirts of the forest.

Enter Vidushaka (the Jester) in a melancholy mood.

#### Vidushaka.

(Sighing.)

Heigho ! My companioning With this hunt-enamoured King Hath to a shadow worn me out. "There a boar crashes !" "There a deer Flies from the thicket!" Pealing shout On shout like this bedins my ear. While summer's fiercest ardours burn We must till midday range about O'er glades where shadows umber thin, And since with heat the streams are dried We must perforce be satisfied With such drink as stagnates in Pools whose putrid waters turn Bitter to the taste or sour With the drop from hour to hour Of leaves upon them. But sore thirst Could drive us to such drink accurat. At random quite we dine. Yet worst Of all is that we chiefly eat Of palate-scorching roasted meat. Elephants trumpet, horses neigh All night and drive sweet sleep away. And willy nilly we must wake Ere dawn aroused by horrid din

10

Which those game-greedy sins of sin The forest-ranging huntsmen raise. Is that all? No. A pimple grows Upon the boil.\* The other day Our king his comrades did forsake And hunting followed in the wake Of a fleet fawn. Straight he goes To a grove where hermits dwell. There, woe's me! as it befell Through my curs'd lot, he a maid Called Sakuntala sees. 'Tis said Since then never to return Homeward doth his spirit yearn. As my mind such thoughts doth think My eyes forget to have their wink Of sleep, when lo! the day doth break: 40 For all which there's no medicine, none ! I'm waiting till my royal friend His morn-prayer said, his toilet done This way may his footsteps bend. [Walking and looking about.] But soft! with wild flowers garlanded With his bow upon his hand, His lady-love upon his heart, Hither tend my monarch's feet. Here then must I take my stand As I were palsied and my part 50 Well playing, respite thus entreat. (Stands leaning on a staff.) Enter King Dushyanta.

# King.

True, she is difficult to gain, Yet some solace 'tis to know Her thought towards me, and although Love may not its wish attain Yet their mutual longings deep Loving hearts in joy must steep: Ah me! Lovers by such art Beguile their souls. They love to read Their own thoughts in their loved one's heart. 60 Her glance was tender, though 'twere turning On other things, and slow her gait, Be it through coquetry or weight Of her own hips, the words she spake Unto her friend with anger'd brow Who stopt her saying "Go not thou"-Were these not meant for me? O how Lovers themselves in their fond yearning Pivot of all that happens make!

# Vidushaka.

(Still in the same attitude.)

70

O monarch, I am powerless To stretch this arm, so let me bless With words only.

King.

(Smiling.)

Whence the pain

80

#### Vidushaka.

You strike a blow

At mine eye, then ask that I Should the subtle cause explain Which causes them with tears to flow.

# King.

Good friend, your words transcend my skill To comprehend them, be more plain.

#### Vidushaka.

When on a river-bank you spy
A cane-plant that doth imitate
A hunch-back, King, be pleased to state
What makes it so—or its own will
Or the surge infuriate?

King.

Doubtless the torrent.

Vidushaka.

Even so

'Tis you who wrought my body's woe.

King.

How can it be?

The Vidushake in the Indian dramas is a Brahmin's son, extremely timid and voracious. He bears a close resembles to the perasitus of the Plautine comedy.

#### Vidushaka.

Does it befit
A monarch like yourself to quit
Your realm ancestral that you may
Huntsman-like in forests stray?
I am a Brahman, as you know,
And ever since you made me go
In your suit in quest of game
All disjointed is my frame:
And since, alas! these limbs no more
Their former ruler's power obey
Even for one single day
Respite grant me, I implore.

90

#### King.

# [Aside]

That then is his prayer. I too
Listless of the chase have grown
And all for Kanwa's daughter. She 100
That charmer haunts my memory.
No more, now the heart have I
To bend my bow against the deer
Though shaft-bedight and drawn. And why?
They by ever dwelling near
That sweet maiden, to my thought
Have the bright contagion caught
Of her lustre-shooting eye.

#### Vidushaka.

[Looking at the King's face.]
There's something else upon his mind
Alas! to woods I make my moan.

110

King.

[Smiling.]

It is not proper not to heed A friend's request, so I refrain From going to the chase again.

Vidushaka.

Long may you live!

[Moves off.]

King.

Good fellow! Stay, List to something I would say.

Vidushaka.

Needs must I kingly hest obey.

King.

From hunts laborious thou art freed. In an easier task I need Thy good help, sirrah.

Vidushaka.

Is it, pray,

In eating sweetmeats?

#### King.

I'll declare.

120

#### Vidushaka.

I have the leisure.

King.

Ho! who's there?
[Enter Warder.]

Warder.

What commands Your Majesty?

King.

Bid the General come to me.

#### Warder.

I'll do my liege, as you command. (Goes out and returns with Raivataka.)

[To the General.]

This way, Lord General, at hand, There His Majesty doth stay, And fain would converse with you. Pray Be pleased to turn your steps this way.

#### General.

[Looking at the King.]
Hunting, sure, is a harmful thing
To the frame. But our good king

Has thriven upon it. Just survey! Incessantly he draws the bow—A toilsome task—and bears the blaze Of the Sun-god's scorching rays With no drop of sweat to flow; Hence hath he grown a little lean, Yet may no man mark the same So well-fashioned is his frame. Yes, His stalwart Majesty To my eyes appears to be With life's essential might endowed, Like a haughty elephant seen Ranging o'er the mountains green.

140

[Approaching the King.]

Victorious be Your Majesty!
Full of good game seems to be
This forest, for within its shroud
We have marked the wild deer ranging free.
What further hests are there, O King?

# King.

General, since this man doth say Ill things of our hunting, we Feel no more inclined that way.

150

# General.

[Aside to Vidushaka.]
Friend Madhayya, do thou cling
To thy resolve, while I assay

To humour well our master's mind.

# [To the King. Aloud.]

My liege, what this mad loon doth speak Is sheer folly. Need we seek Better proof than we can find In you, our royal Master? How chase reduces fat and thins The hunter's waist and makes more fit For deeds of might the hunter's frame. To know what changes rage and fear Work upon the minds of beasts— This lore hunting teaches clear; Also when the archer's aim Doth a moving target hit. What high glory then he wins! To think the chase should be maligned As though it were a vice ! Say, where Such amusement, can we find In other things?

170

160

#### Vidushaka.

[Angrily.]

Out of my sight
Thou advocate of brutish might!
Know, our royal Lord hath now
Returned to his old self and thou
Son of a slave-girl, do thou roam
From forest unto forest till
An old old bear that longs to kill
A jackal or a deer may fill

Estergeth with thee.

# King,

# [To the General.]

Since, O friend,

We have come nigh a hermit-home
Thy counsel, I cannot commend.
Let bisons plunge in pools of mud
And butt with horns their waters oft
While herded 'neath the shadow soft
The deer may safely chew the cud.
In the pools let each leading boar
Uproot the sedge and well he may,
For with string unstrung once more
My bow must have some rest to-day.

General.

As likes you best.

King.

So now recall
The archers that have gone before
And do thou bid the soldiers all
Disturb not the calm hermit-grove
But from it far their tumults move.
Hermits are forbearing, yet
Within them secretly doth glow
A hidden principle of ire
Prone to blaze and this they show
Only when provoked by fire

180

190°

Of others that infiame them. Such The sun-gem\* is though cool to touch. 200

General.

I'll do as bid.

Vidushaka.

Out of my sight !
Thou advocate of brutish might?

[Exit General.]

King.

Doff your hunting garb and thou Doorkeeper, in thy post abide.

#### Vidushaka.

You've cleared you of the flies, so now Sit you down upon this stone O'er which the branches of the tree Have spread a shadowing canopy; And I at ease, near to your side Shall seated be.

210

King,

Pray go before.

Vieushaka.

Nay after you.

# King.

Friend, I must own Useless quite thine eyes to be, Since they thus have missed the view Of what was most worth seeing.

#### Vidushaka.

Why?

Stands not yourself before me?

King.

True !

To each man handsomest is he He loveth. 'Tis of her speak I Sakuntala that fair maid Glory of yon hermit-glade.

220

Vidushaka,

[Aside.]

I must encourage him no more
In this desire. (Aloud.) Why will you gaze
On that hermit-maid when she
Wed to you can never be?

King:

Fool 1

Say, then, wherefore do men raise Charmed eye towards the moon's bright horn\*

Professor Ludwig Fritze of Koepenick aptly compares:—
 "Die Sterne, die begehrt man nicht
Man freut sich ihrer Fracht,
Und mit Entzücken blickt man auf
In jeder heitern Nacht,"

Nor once vail the steadfast lid? Know Dushyanta never did Bend his heart on thing forbid.

#### Vidushaka.

How so?

#### King.

Kanwa's child is born
Of a dazzling nymph divine.
Ever since she was forsook
By her nymph-mother, Kanwa took
Her nurture on him. Is not she
Like a fresh young jasmine-flower
Dropt upon an arka-tree?

#### Vidushaka.

As one sick of dates may yearn
For sour tamarind, so your heart
Scorns the lovely dames that dwell
In your palace but to burn
For a Sakuntala.

240

230

#### King.

Well 1

Thou hast not seen her to this hour, So thou may'st such folly prate.

A large and vigorous shrub known to botanists'as Calotropis gigantea

250

#### Vidushaka.

Charming must she be who breeds Such wonderment in you.

# King.

What needs
More talking? Ah me! Did the great
Artist calmly ponder first.
O'er all lovely things he erst
Had made, and were they then combined
All to mould this wondrous maid?
For while I His glorious art
Ponder and her form divine,
Seems she like a gem to shine
Matchless among womankind.

#### Vidushaka.

She must surely cast in shade All beauteous women.

#### King.

Yet my mind
Thinks: "This flower whose fragrant scent
None inhaled yet, this soft spray
Yet unsevered from its stem
By rude fingers,\* this fair gem
260

Compare Catullus:—
 "Ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis
 Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro.....,
 Sic virgo &c."

And Ariosto's exquisite imitation:

"La verginella è simile alla rosa,
Che'n bel giardin su la nativa spina,
Mentre sola, e sicura si riposa" &c.

That none yet wore as ornament,
This fresh honey which yet none
Tasted, this reserved fruit
For pious deeds in past lives done,
This lovely form where none may trace
Aught that mars its perfect grace—
Who will enjoy it, who can say?"

#### Vidushaka.

Meet is it then that your suit Should succeed, or else that maid, I fear, will surely fall a prey To some hermit-lad whose head Reeks of oil of ingudi.\*

270

# King.

Not mistress of her will is she, From home her sire is away.

#### Vidushaka.

Yet you must know how her mind Is towards yourself inclined.

# King, .

My friend, you know as well as I, By nature hermit-maids are shy. For she did lower both her eyes When on her I bent my glance; Her laughter, could not, did not rise

See footnote on page 11.

From the cause she did advance. Fettered so by modesty
Was the love of that sweet maid,
That to me it seemed to be
Neither hidden, nor displayed.

#### Vidushaka.

Should she then on your lap have lept Soon as she saw you?

# King.

When she fled
With her two friends, methinks, I read
The feelings of her heart. "A blade
Of grass has stung my feet" the maid
Of the dainty limbs thus said
Needlessly; when she had stept
A paces few, back did she turn
As though her bark-dress she would free
From branches of the brambly tree
Though there it clung not.

#### Vidushaka.

Surely, she

Had given you victuals for your way To make your longing heart thus yearn For the hermit-precincts.

# King.

Friend,
Frame some pretext, so that we
Thither once again may wend.

290

#### Vidushaka.

Why a pretext, seeing you Are Sovereign?

King.

What is it you say?

#### Vidushaka.

You can bid the hermits pay Tithe\* to you of wild rice due.

King.

Fool!

They bring tithe of other things

These hermits—things such as defy
The worth of costliest gems piled high.

Transient are the tithes that kings
Bid their other subjects pay,
The penance-tithet the hermit brings
For them, doth survive for aye.

310

A voice behind the Scene.

At last our object we have found.

King.

[Listening.]

So grave and calm the voice doth sound, They must be hermits.

[Enter Doorkeeper.]

<sup>•</sup> The Hindu tithe wasta sixth part of liquid, flowers, roots, fruit grass &c.

<sup>†</sup> i. e. A part of the blessings arising from the self-imposed penance of the hermite account to the king who protected them.

# Door-keeper.

Victory

Attend you royal Majesty!
At the entrance-door there stand
Two hermit-youths.

King.

Without delay,

Bring them before me.

Door-keeper;

At command !

[To the Hermits.]

This way, O hermits, come this way.

320

[Enter Hermits.]

### First Hermit.

How majestic is his mien,
Yet what confidence entreat
Those features. Saint-like kings are seen
Of such brow, so haughty-sweet.
All his folk protecting he
Treasures daily stores of merit
And doth a stage of life inherit
Which by mortals reached can be.
Far as the high heavens ring
By seraph-bards sung o'er and o'er
Praises of this self-curbed king
Whom as hermit pure they sing

With 'King'-title placed before.\*

Second Hermit.

Is this Dushyanta Indra's friend?

First Hermit.

Why askest thou? I prithee state.

Second Hermit.

'Tis no marvel that whose arm
Is like the long bar of the gate
Of a city, should this earth
Far as lies its watery girth
Rule singly. Gods who Demons hate,
When troubled by their war's alarm,
Hope that their victory is nigh
When this King his bow doth bend
Or Indra hurls his bolt from high.

340

Hermits.

All hail O Monarch!

King.

And I too

Salute you both.

Hermits.

O King, may you

Have good fortune!

He to king sage ' ('Rajarshi') a degree lower than the 'sage ' (Maharshi') a tible which Brahmins alone could obtain.

#### King.

Fain would I Learn what made you hither hie.

#### Hermits.

Hearing your majesty is near The hermits pray—

#### King.

I wish to hear What it is that they command.

#### 350

#### Hermits.

As our chief-hermit is not here;
Our peaceful hermitage a band
Of lawless Demons doth infect.
They our holy rites molest.
Therefore, O Monarch, thee we pray
In our hermit-grove to stay
Together with thy charioteer
For a few nights and to clear
Of dangers all our home.

# King.

Nay I

360

Reckon this an honour high.

### Vidushaka,

(Aside.)

Now to the very place you so Desired hath Chance pushed you to go.

#### King.

O Raivatak bid charioteer Bring chariot, bows, and arrows here.

#### Hermits.

A worthy act for you whose aim
Is to follow in the wake
Of your forefathers' virtuous fame.
Puru's sons know how to make
Sacrifices such as wrest
Fears from bosoms fear-opprest.

370

#### King.

Proceed, O hermits and I shall Your footsteps sue.

#### Hermits.

May victory

Ever your royal self befall !

### King.

Friend Madhavya, thee I ask, Wouldst thou Sakuntala see?

#### Vidushaka.

Then was no danger. Woe is me I Now full of peril is the task.

## King.

Feer net, with me thou shalt abide.

#### Vidushaka.

As wheel-warder at your side.

380

#### Raivataka.

The ready chariot now awaits
Your victorious journey, King
And Karabhak from city come
Doth tidings from your mother bring.

King.

From my mother?

Raivataka.

So he states.

King.

Bring him.

Raivataka.

Our Lord the King is here. So Karabhak approach thou near.

#### Karabhaka.

Victorious be your Majesty!
Your Royal Mother says to you:—
"But four days hence approacheth due 39
That fast which mothers undertake
To break it eating with their sons
And mine (long live he!) swift must come
For parent's honour as is fit."

## King.

Here must I for hermits' sake
Answer their great need at once,
And there my mother calls me home.
Neither ought I to omit.
What must I do now?

#### Vidushaka.

Do as did

400

Old Trisanku.\* Thyself instal Right in the middle.

## King.

I am bid

To different spots by Duty's call. Hence my mind is cleft in twain, As hindered by a rock, amain Bursting parts a river's stream.

## (To Vidushaka)

As her own son doth thee esteem My royal mother; so I pray Repair thou homeward and fulfil Towards her a son's duty; say

410

Outh) whose story is told in the Ramayana. He is said to have requested the sage Vashishtha to raise him alive to heaven, whereupon the irate sage curst the bold king who at once became a Chandala (i. e. a pariah). Sage Vishwamitra the antagonist of Vashishtha took up the case of Trisanku and by his supernatural powers raised him alive to heaven. But the gods loth to admit an interloper pushed him down Vishwamitra, nothing daunted, again raised him up. Thus the unfortunate monarch was condemned to remain in the region between heaven and earth, with his heels raised towards the heavens and his head bent downwards towards the earth. It is said that he still shages as a star in the southern hemisphere.

Here I must remain until I the hermits' wish have done.

#### Vidushaka.

Think not one moment that I dread Demons.

#### King.

How can that be said Of mighty Brahmin as thou art?

#### Vidushaka,

Now like true-born monarch's son I wish to go.

## King.

My retinue
With thee will I bid depart.
I all tumults must remove
From the hermits' penance-grove

#### Vidushaka.

I look a true-born prince.

## King.

(To himself)

'Tis true

He is loquacious and may tell My women-folk of her I woo. But let that be! 420

# (Aloud)

Hear me, my friend,

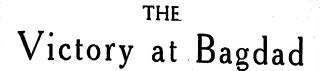
A reverence felt in high degree
For hermits maketh me to wend
Towards the grove where hermits dwell.
I have no passion for the maid.
For what am I and what is she—
'Mongst the fawns she a stranger bred
To Love? Prithee seriously
Take not what in jest I said.

#### Vidushaka.

Of course, of course, so must it be.

[Exeunt.

End of Act II.



BY

SAURENDOO BHUSAN SEN GUPTA

OF

THE RANCHI BAR.

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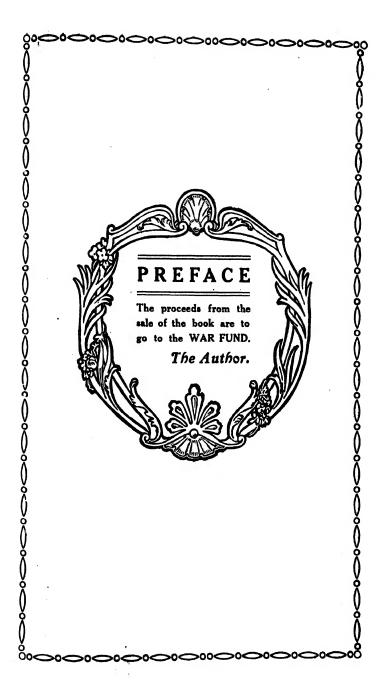
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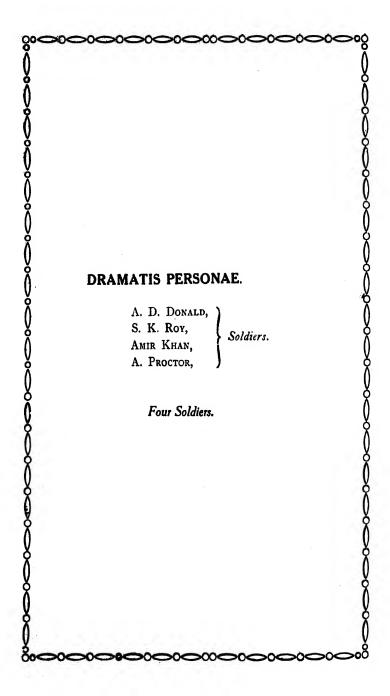
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# The Victory at Bagdad.

## SCENE I.

An open field with Camps in the distance. Enter three Sentinels to keep watch.

#### Amir-

Oh! it is after a long time, we three friends have been thrown together. Really I don't know after how many months we have had this opportunity to open our hearts to each other.

# Donald and Roy-

Yes, friend! I can't say how happy we were when we heard it announced that we three have been selected to keep watch this night.

## Roy-

Oh! it is a beautiful night!

How solemn the palm-groves from distance look! Oh! what a moon in heaven crystal clear! No speck of cloud dims it: how grand the moon, With her train starry, sails, to scatter peace Any joy; the camp, the field, goliath guns, The huge, untold war things, all, in its glow, Lie bath'd, rapt, cold, as if devoid of all Their fatal fiery virtues. What contrast With day! the night is like a night of where I was born. Ah! what visions, rainbow-hued, Kaleidoscopic, like the magic wand,

Of sorcerers from Egypt, in my mind, It conjures up; a numbness opiate, My bosom fills and fails my memory. My heart is heavy with delicious pain. Ah memory! the sword two-edged—of bliss And torture— Oh! friend! by the Almighty, Our Father, forg'd: mysterious like things We see in this world; where is good, a tree, Oft evil-rooted, bending with sweet fruits Of wisdom; only God knows which is which. Methinks, an age I've parted from the land, Which shine with balmy sheen, that other spots Mere envy pining. The serene spring smile, Her robe, in purest green, with tissues shot, In Nature's most select loom spun. There holds, In regal splendour, the six grand seasons, Their courts, by turns: her darling, each, Close clasping in the flowing folds of skirts, The skirts of their apparels - to bestow The loveliest kiss possible. Ah! there, The morning beauty and profundity Of evening, are ambrosial; they charm The sense of pain away: Where trees and all around dance with a glee, That cannot but be His: whose shady vales Much vocal with multitudinous strains, Teeming with gloom like twilight, spell, all day Dream rapture; and the Dryads and Satyrs play There hide and seek, each other, chasing rapt: Vales sparkling oft with thousand silver rills; On whose smooth margin, glossy with trim grass, The sylvan fairies trip gay, sunning while Their streaming tresses, raven black, at noon:

Whereof, the birds discourse enchanting notes,
Delight-distilled; and ever breeze in hearts
Peace wafts; while sporting with tangl'd ebon locks
Of damsels. Ah! there, what blue sky, all day!!
The vaulted dome, how, calm, serene, and clear!
Redolent of divine philosophy,
That sages in immemorial time sang,
In voice that rings through all the ages. It straight
Soaring aloft in tremulous heights, cuts
For good, the knot of fate, free-will, and birth,
Necessity, to make us bear the load—
The world load— with such a heroic grace.
Where earth, so bounteous, as bumper crop
For asking yields; and reigns what peace and calm.

#### Donald-

Quite glad to know that you dear, a country has That can of such things boast; but I have failed To see your country and to share your food As yet once; I've good deal heard this night. You tell me oft of peace there you enjoy: But what you say, methinks, clean proves that peace Like this, before, none knew. The British, it's That unto Ind brought it all.

## Roy-

Ask Khan—he knows what a glory peace has shed O'er India there; what uncommon ring Of halo, born of virtues, play round her. With priceless gems of happiness, plenty, And bliss is set this crown; such majesty, The British, her, have dowered with; I read Not history much in young school days, oft though

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Now I repent. The golden book of life,
And wisdom History is: of knowledge cave,
The open sesame. Man's history is
The only thing we need care for and know.
What nobler theme, than science of all races,
And mankind, at an age, whose badge, world known
Is science—the top—fashion, mania!
What better light, more profitable guide
Than this, infallible in trouble of ours,
There can be, I know not. In by-gone days,
No peace like this the land enjoy'd. Ask Khan
To tell what peace was like those days.

#### Amir-

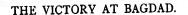
Belike, the land resembl'd one, whose pulse Beat weak, whose heart beat feeble; in whose veins The blood did sprightly not dance; cold were Whose hands and feet. The zone of sceptre's force. The royal seat—the capital—defin'd. Whereas, of other distant provinces, Their nearness to the heart—the capital. Denoted, was, index to its force. The farthest provinces—the hands and feet— Were cold at last: confusion, anarchy, Stalk'd widely there. Each king's demise let loose Disorder and her child red havoc. Peace Was not at home among us here. She was Oh! out of doors most times: was ever she Of the good faith for her protection sure? Guarantee any was vouchsaf'd to her Here never; she was left to shift as best She could for herself: like a lamb she was Amid wolves doubtless,—ever ill at ease.

Upon the Government, e'er heavily hung The spectre of grim fate: it blew oft, where It listed; none was sure what to expect. When Government with princes chang'd. A sensitive rare plant, of regions pure, A growth distinct, with thousand shiny boughs. Has under the mild equable kind rays Of British rule, so flourish'd: she has now Here a firm footing; she unlike old days In open air lives not; but home now has, For comfort and security. She knows A father she has, who, a vigil keeps, Each moment over her. And then world-known The English education, which—the sun Of British rule,—to India has giv'n A vivifying life unknown before; Ideas of sweet feelings, unity, Illumine us; and beams in hearts of all, Friend! now a light of broad humanity. But what most charms me of the British mind. Is its stead balance, perfect, ne'er disturb'd Or lost, ne'er sway'd by any gust of wind.

#### Donald-

Both Amir and Roy talks as if they are very well read. Their appearance is also noble. Do they come of high family as me? More by and by (aside). I am very glad to hear you speak so highly of the British rule. Your talk has enlightened me much. But I think when you make the comparison you bear in mind that the world in general has also progressed much since the time you speak of.

[They pace like sentries.



## Roy-

By the way, just tell us Donald how did you spend the days before you joined the war. I am very eager to know this.

#### Amir-

I am also eager to know.

## Donald-

How with my hounds, ere rosy morn, The hill-tops kiss'd, and crown'd them with pure gold. -A peerless picture which in vain to ape E'er Art tries;—I, the glens, full hard, on horse My Dolly, scour'd to ferret the foxes out! How swift it flew, awhile, with hooves all shod. Hot, striking fire off the granite: it seem'd To hardly touch the ground; how light I felt, As the fresh breeze more bracing -thousand times-Than iron tonics of the human make. My forehead kiss'd cool, dallying with my locks. How like ethereal beings or larks blithe, I felt when riding on my horse. How lov'd I Dolly, clean and sleek,-more than a man It was; how deep when I approach'd it neigh'd. And then when came the storm-and in our parts It oft so comes,-I view'd from my lone study The elemental orgies, all attention.

What sombre motley hues diversified

And decked the hills!—now blue, now purple grey:

How like preflood, lost mammoths they—the hills—

Against the dark sky, silhouetted look'd!

How pour'd the rains! the alleys ran, full swift,

Down splashing waterfall like. But methinks,

[He points to the sky.

In yonder welkin lightning darts; to storm
A sign, what else; for I remember, friend!
My country storm oft lightning led:—yes then—
At night, enchanted how, I, lost, beheld
The moon all splendid rise and flood the knolls.
The wavy valleys: what a pattern—board!
Of shade and light upon the ground it wove.
All slept in dreamland, it seem'd; wh'd have thought
Of such soul melting night just after storm.
The war began; the call to arms reach'd me;
—What child can stay home when his mother calls;—
I join'd the war, came here. But Amir, Roy,
Your friendship has been a God send to me:
My home—sweet home—it has made me forget.

## Roy-

Ah! friendship pure! it's never dimm'd by dirt
Of self: it blesses all that worships it;
Against the satan self, a talisman;
A never failing charm: a cup not earthy;
Whose nectar'd one deep draught makes God of us.
Ah! there the bugle sounds; how it's! our watch
So soon it ends? to the unfooted Time,
Whose speed on need depends, our talk set wings.

#### SCENE II.

An open field—Amir and Donald engaged in conversation leaning on motor cycles; not far from a ruined house.

#### Donald-

The sky is cloudy still; how fierce strikes
The red huge sun from the palm-trees between.
But what! the lamps are smash'd, are they all gone?
How shall we go sans light in such a night?
Oh! I see it is done all by the storm.

## Amir-

Oh! what a storm! we were undone. I thought, When started we for this our work, the sky. And all around was ominously calm. All on a sudden, then burst the wind, How it blew, rag'd and roar'd. Oh God it seem'd. Ten thousand cannons blowing up to dust This globe. We thought, the end of world was come: No more the sun would rise: nor we behold The sunlit face of this fair earth again! The banks of monstrous clouds, that scudd'd o'er, Seem'd, would break ne'er. It look'd eternal night: A pall of gloom the earth around all drap'd: Jagged lightning flash'd from end to end, above, Its bosom ripping: by the roots, giant trees Were torn up: branches crack'd, were split: Some went like arrows, speeding till they stuck In other far off trees like pointed pins.

Like bullets sands sing'd, pierc'd us: clouds of them Against our face were driv'n, blinding us. How many birds, fell dead, and shriek'd—none knows: A carnival, it was, of wind, lightning.

And thunder: then the Heavens open'd.

#### Donald-

The rain has ceased now. But how are we to go home: it is growing dark; and I am afraid I have lost our way. Hallow! here an old man comes: perhaps he may tell us something about the whereabouts. Let us acquaint him with our plight.

#### Enter Farmer.

#### Farmer-

What the world has come to! has it turn'd to khakhi? but they seem not our allies the Huns; they are of the opposite party—the Allies—who have recently conquered this part of the country.

## Donald (to Amir)-

He seems a man advanced in life. But what on earth brings him here at this time? Great God be thanked (to the farmer)—I say father: we are British soldiers. We cycled on an errand; but our lamps are all broken; and then we are afraid as it is getting dark, we won't be able to find the way out. But really we are surprised to see you of such venerable age here at this time!

#### Farmer-

My tale would make one weep; so painful sad, I once was worth, a prince's ransom whole. The barge of life—all sails with fortune fill'd Smooth glided on world ocean; all pink look'd:

What message perfum'd deep with cheer and love, The morn and even daily spoke. Methought, The sun and moon, the great world soul, Through which, e'er look, beam, speak eternal truth, Wove witchery, which man's speech fails to paint. But now as lowly wretched, as the worm, That crawls upon the earth, I am; the war Began, and daily tale of horror, woe, Of havoc, -no poet's frenzy could conceive, -The heart of pity thorough pierc'd; and tear. Tears voluble—my sides much pain'd; And cold lay sleep awake all night fear-smit. Like locust swarms, Huns-whisper fill'd our ears, Upon a village, fall and suck, ere they Depart, to marrow bones. In constant fear Of this, a scourge more dreadful than before,— E'er human wit was bid contend—we wept, Wore knees, and pray'd and pass'd our days half dead. One day at dead of night, when sleep with Peace Its vizier, rul'd the earth, like sweeping flood,-Of ruin the courier, ruthless - a Hun horde -Our allies, Sir—of Turks—upon us broke: Demanded meat and drink with blood-shot eyes:-Food, drink we gave, Sir, everything, indeed. The morrow woke; and life and wrath from eyes Of us all molten, darted, flowed and burned Us fully:—our fat wondrous calves to see Slain, murder'd; and my son of two ten years, A flower, fed with innocence snow-pure, My only child—pole star—on pain of death, The part of butcher forc'd to play. It hung Like cloud on cloud their dark crime. Next they fell Upon the store house, its last drop of juice

#### 

To squeeze, to drain. At even they departed: -Their lust gorg'd, pamper'd brimful, with rich loot,-My men, my cattles, and all they could lay There hands upon :- my son, my hope, my joy, My life,—I have no wife -she died young-This child-whereby, my thread of life Sole hangs-from me bound all wise, nearly they Tore: specks, white, blue, all o'er the world flower'd: Before my eyes they swam; a veil of mist The world drew over it; to a black point The sun grew thin; my senses left me void: Giddy down I fell at their feet, prostrate; Imploring him-my son-in sobs, for all, In their greed, they, who never scruple the crime Of murder for a bad brass farthing, kept As charm, might ask...... (weeping) Last they relented, gave my son, their fill Of revenge, on my house, once stately proud, They spent;—all but one razing to the ground. This day, my son on urgent work, I sent; But he not yet, though past an hour, come back; And so to seek him I am here.

## Amir-

In yonder ruin of some time house, that roof'd Us, from the wrath of elements, a youth We met, who, Schiraz, gave out as his name.

## Farmer-

The same, the same, Great God be praised.

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#### Donald-

Oh father verily melts our heart at grief
Of yours: more anon while you show the way.

#### SCENE III.

A Hospital Camp, Donald and Amir lying on beds hurt. Amir awake, Donald sleeping.

Enter Rov.

## Roy-

How is Donald?

## Amir-

Doctor says that Donald is out of danger. What a terrible battle oh! all's well that ends well. All praise to Almighty; (the looks up with folded hands) we have won Bagdad.

[Donald wakes.

## Donald-

Ah! what my dear friend, Roy! I see: to me
Than life and light who dearer is—I have
No brother, sister, none, alas! I am,
An utter stranger to the sweet pure love,
Affection that one's brothers and sisters
E'er links;—affection which like songs of dove
(I've heard men oft, to speak such things like these)
Invisible, at clear and warm noon-day,
From timid tendrils of a bushy wood,
Of leafy spring, far from the jarring din
Of Mammon's worship, showers melody
Of peace: or like the rhythmic pensive lap
Of Thames waves, against the shores at eve,

## ○o⇔o⇔o⇔o⇔o⇔o THE VICTORY AT BAGDAD.

When half the hemisphere composes itself To meditation of the Great,—the Good, Beyond conception of us, perfect, pure,— A glimpse of the far-off infinite, Unknowable, at interval permits; Or like the moon in stainless heaven high, At midnight with the song of rare nightingale Sonorous, off and on, makes us forget, This worldly life, transporting us to climes;— The sun where mellow shines and which ne'er knows Bereavement, poignant parting or the ills Which rack and prey and tear us here so much. But friendship! Roy of yours has been to me More than the love of any one, I know. Long I yearn'd, waited for one to confide My weals and woes in: men I found, but none Were meet to share my thoughts, my griefs and joys. At last, I found you here—a priceless gift Of heaven sure. I know each minute fact, Each detail, point by point, how you, me saved, From jaws of death: how tenderly my friend You took up me, when death in hundred shapes, In myriad forms, grinn'd and shot weird glances. But what's the result of the battle? I fairly remember doctor telling me that we have won

# Roy-

Bagdad. Is it really true?

We've Bagdad won, the classic town of old, The London, Paris, Delhi, of those days, Where Alexandria, Suez, Ispahan, Cape Comorin, Calecot, Borneo,

Timor, and India—the famed ports Of the then world—their sapphires, cloths of gold And muslins,-light and fine like gossamer,-Pearls, rubies, ivories and friend! what not! Like tributary rivers pour'd—all flow'd— To Bagdad—the deep ocean—heap on heap. The world-old Bagdad of the Caliphs, Who made a second paradise of it On earth: with milk white marbles, cupolas, Domes, minarets, and palaces set it. The city shone like the supreme effort, Of a Raphelle or Michael Angelo: The houries danced and played in lovely halls; From sweet palm lemon groves, the bulbul sang, At all hours amorous: and silver founts, In yards, to keep time, play'd: the Bagdad Whose very dust is fragrant with and shrines A story of the Ar'ban nights! The Bagd . Of Haroun-al-Rachid the Great, who drank From agate vessels, ate from wares all pearl; And days and nights-its several parts-saw In clocks that sent to the hour struck, men, knights, In equal number to proclaim the Time. We, friend the hope of Huns-their silk-spun dream Of a realm Belg to Bagd-with railway wrought, To dust have shiver'd flat.

#### Donald-

I am glad beyond measure to know that the British flag now waves over Bagdad. I think that we did 'our bit' that day.

#### Amir-

How goodly, gallantly, we fought; the Gods, Their bowers must have left, this courage here, Display'd in us—their image—to notice. Belike home they all went full sad, heart broke; Their faultless courage seeing mirror'd such. Oh! what hell boom'd the guns; how thunder'd maxims; How rifles scream'd; how bayonets hit, beam'd, Sword hiss'd and horse hoov's clash'd. Till the last day When life shall fail me, memory of this With me play trick:—this battle to the thrust Of bayonets, depicting to my mind. My dreams oft me would cheat; and many times, Amid my thousand little works of world, In Di'la bank I would be after life: Rehearsing graphic all that took place here. Boat loads of men, battalions: -the pink, pride-Of us, were lowered: all clean swept like straws Before gorge stream or a tornado dash. Of Britain's life all in the flush of youth,-Her best, all in their prime verve, squads and squads Stept, manly, knowingly, for their great mother, Above all high-to lay their lives, all love Aglow, at war God's altar. Six brave batches Undaunted Di'la fill'd: methought with bosom-The planks—they would the river span—a blood-bridge. The stream, of woe, to tell the ocean wide, All red, dirg'd slowly on: sulphureous The breath of heaven—of fire death, stench mixt -A horrid mixture-turn'd: it lost its smell Its native smell of peace. The elements Weed donn'd of grief, of colour that the earth

Pale shrouds when sets the crescent moon at night. Light, piebald, lurid, hundred tongu'd flamed up, On either side of it, to make the scene

More ghastly, from war missiles with death tipp'd.

But dust and smoke from hoov's and guns—

Of righteous God the vicegerents sure—

Our fortress, victory, prov'd and won the day.

## Roy-

But Donald! your and Amir's cool courage, The day determined. Time that all defeats. His feet upon all puts and turns to dust, Unwonted in its niche, a memorial All gold, will ever keep of you two. When ranks and ranks were mown down, fell like corn When ripe under swains' scythe; or like sear'd leaves When wintry gusts to marrow stirs the trees: When life like water of a broken dam, Profusely flow'd to mix with the Great life; When organisation, the soul of you, -Of Britain's greatness! took such painful breath; When a wild gloom the spacious firmament, Canopied, and from sight it blotted all; When hollow eye'd, pale and gaunt despair Like vultures hover'd over head: what courage Alone was of avail! like intellect, Divorc'd from moral force it's sure to come To ruin: it's you then friend with doughty zeal, Unwonted pluck and judgment-a marvel Of combination—for in the sheer stress Of action, the function of the brains Is oft at dead lock, nay paralysed To nil:-it's you! then led a boat of men

With Amir as help-mate; it's he who leapt
Next from the ranks to succour you dear friend!
—To die if death (who knows) perchance hits you;
For life is not worth living if you dear!
Leaves us here, desolate and lone to mourn
Your death:—oh! with these handful of brave men
You cross'd the stream, then friend the other side
Gain'd; a firm footing secur'd, pav'd the way,
And laid the foundation for victory.
What time in balance hung the battle fate
With one great stroke of valour you at once
Decided it. The honour due to one,
Who first discovers or espies something,
Like Newton or Columbus is to you
All due.

#### Donald -

Your speech, your way of talking; -all speak of something more than you seem.

## Amir and Roy-

And friend! your appearance, your courtesy, your manners, all show too that there must be something more in you than meet the eye.

#### Donald-

I see then we are all come of high family.

## Amir and Rov-

All glory to the British flag that have brought us all together of high family eager to give our lives for the same cause; and have united us (of three different religions) with a bond of friendship that will not abate a jot though ages may come and go.

## Roy-

What's the time? when are the doctor and the nurses to come? Amir—(looking up at the watch lying on the table). It is just 2 p.m. The doctor and the nurses are to come at six.

#### Donald-

I feel a curiosity to know how did you both feel before you joined the war, and what did you do to join it. I think I remember Roy once told me that he joined the war after the Indian Government had given Indians permission to enlist.

## Roy-

The day I well remember, when the news Me reach'd, that fit and worthy judg'd I am For entry as a soldier: how sore ach'd My heart, as I down tumbl'd on the thought-Before the news was out—that Fate, bad luck, Against me might the balance turn. Oh! God, My hope of serving my king's cause thus lost: The world seem'd nought: I lik'd not e'en the sight Of them—my kith and kin—who fed my life; A moment's separation from whose side At other times, it seem'd to strangle me; Sleep-soothing sleep-me left; e'er and anon I woke, My dizzy brain refusing to submit To the suave influence of mighty sleep. Nothing seem'd to please me: all things their charms For me oh! lost. How, I, my friend and all, In whom the flame of consciousness burn'd bright, Now flush'd, now pal'd, now sweat'd copious;—

The stages—the rungs of hope and despair:—
Whene'er the thought of thought—the crowning thought
—And oft this thought bulk'd large in mind of us,—
Indeed our meat and drink it last became,—
Of the great judgment day, when all be judg'd
Unfit or fit to be a soldier, beat
Against our breast. The daily round of work
Their due share of attention lost We group'd
In knots for gossip, laid plans, held counsels
How success we may win.

#### Enter four Soldiers.

#### First Soldier-

What's the talk about? You seem to be very busy. Is it a very important thing?

## Second Soldier-

I know that you three are great friends; but that does not mean that every thing you three would monopolise between yourselves. You always seem to be on the look out for an opportunity when to open your hearts. That's bad after all, especially for soldiers (laughing).

## Donald-

It is nothing private which you cannot hear. Roy was only telling us how did he feel before he joined the war. It is simply thrilling; I wish you all had been present to hear him. Very good; let us hear Amir. And I think Amir joined the war before Indians were given permission to enlist, so he told me as far as I remember.

# >0<>0<>0<>0<>0<>0</br> THE VICTORY AT BAGDAD.

## Amir-

Worth is my history recital—my tale How I this conflict, partook of: I came As motor driver first. Those days the gate, The pathway leading to the army realm Against us all was clos'd; taboo'd we were To put the khakhi on; but so eager And zealous I became, my king to serve: Speech fails to give a due idea friend! And what became I!! a discomfort prey'd Upon me. It me haunted day and night: Weary I beat my brains to find a way Out of this difficulty: fain my brains Would I have dash'd against some wall to seek A clue to serve my king. At night I lay Wakeful and tossing in the bed. Hard, stiff and thorny, pinching me all night: A feeling of dull pain from head to foot, Me drap'd. Fain would I have leapt into fire. I thought how day by day the vital spark Of Britain's lion strength, this war drains out: How it of Britain's manhood, heavy toll, Each minute, takes; how oh! the English homes That erelong buzz'd and murmur'd with sweet talk And lively gossip, gushing from affairs Of household, are as grave yards or dried streams In arid deserts, silent, and drear now. Oh! homes and boards which rung and echo'd ere With din and hum of joy and merriment;— Which throbb'd with warmth of family circle At eyen, round the genial clean hearth,

Are now with low dull sobs, convulsive groans And tearful utterances and cries all fill'd. The air, there laden with past memories, Complains and moans from room to room all day: The doors and windows on there rusty hinges Oft making creak. How many homes, I thought, Have fatherless, husbandless, oh! become! Men of blue blood, the child of luxuries, Of rosy routine,—who before e'er walk'd In velvet shoes: at whose one gentle call, A single nod, or moving howe'er slight Of fingers, twenty servants scrambl'd, ran, To cater for them; -now in mires, knee-deep, Foul trenches, standing crane-like passes, oh! God, Unwash'd, without any sleep or any rest, Days after days, nights after nights with death Full staring in the face :—a helpless prey To all the fickle moods of atmosphere: No matter whether them the scorching sun, In summer, bakes; or the benumbing frost In winter stiffens; or the pouring rain Thorough wets; they stand like rock unmov'd firm: While I, like them, a fellow subject, bah! Lay sunk in all the pre-war luxuries: Not even a faint breath of the great war -The titanic struggle which the world engulfs Disturbing me: of these things and the like I thought and thought: they smote and stung me sharp Like bites of scorpion all o'er the body. As when the father, the sole earning member,-Bread winner-of a large big family,-Each one dependent for their meat and drink On him-all on a sudden, one day, dies;

The bigger children, who their plight full grasps,
On whom the burden of the family
Plump falls,—though none fit for the weighty task—
Become despondent, listless and morose:—
Each moment thinking of their dead father:—
So, I become despondent and morose.

At last

The post of chauffeur to my rescue came. At least could carry soldiers, I, at times:

Or to them cater when need be: this thought Me solac'd partly: I left college; next,
Apprentic'd myself in a workshop, learnt
The motor driving technics, thoroughly;
Applied for chauffeur's post, got it; my stars
Were sure in the ascendant and came here;
And after a few months the war I joined.

#### Donald-

Yours is a tale that would have done honour to the Gods And so we—

#### Enter Proctor.

## Roy-

But Proctor is coming with a letter.

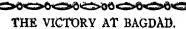
[Every one turns in the same direction

I don't know what it means.

[Proctor gives the missive to Roy. What!!! a Victoria Cross for Donald and Military Crosses for Amir and myself. I can't understand how I deserve it.

#### Donald-

It is as it should be.



#### CHORUS.

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God save from ill our King and Queen;— Of Britain, land o'er seas; Our pious Sovereigns who hearts win; Each, home of virtue, is.

#### П

The Lord of men with creeds that rule
The world this day from prime;—
Of land and seas where sun's ne'er cool;
But shines with moon in chime.

#### III.

Of beasts that the green pasture roam:
Of beasts that prey and tear:
Of fowls that range the free blue dome:
Of fowls that homes our cheer.

#### IV.

The mighty twain who tend us all, With love of Supreme Him, In whom pearls moves wan pity's call; And they their eyes make dim

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Whose heart e'er swell, whose pulse e'er beat, With weal of us and woe;—
Their subjects whether great and fit,
How humble, how so low.

#### VI.

Who think and think and e'er think Of us—no less their sons:
What filial ties with them us link
That anger know not once.

#### VII.

The laws they've made;—such wholesome laws, That evil touch to core: They put their feet upon the cause, And stray away no more.

#### VIII.

From door to door the laws keep watch, Take note of each wrong, care; The right they keep; the wrong despatch; Bestow each man his share.

#### IX.

From door to door the cup of ease, To all, they shelter, give: They, image of all laws of His, Whereby the world does live.

#### X.

With mercy temper'd all their laws;—
Of sacred lore, they born:
The wind it fall: the tiger pause
Before their solemn horn.

#### XI.

Like sun the rays of justice, love, Alike all over shine:— The rich who sleep in silk above; The poor who toil and pine.

#### XII.

Whose sceptre showers joy and peace; Whose crown beams calm all o'er: Who never laugh but comfort, bliss, In hearts of us all pour.

#### XIII.

The crown they wear of jewel scems; Of thorn it's made of sure; Of anxious thoughts full sharp it teems; How thousand griefs to cure.

#### XIV.

Our saviour next to God the Great; In heart's depth we adore. Whenever we pray for our fate Our heart for them first soar

#### XV.

Oh! God thou bless our King and Queen, Their children, kith and kin; With health and peace the blessed twin, With life long joy serene.

#### XVI.

Oh! God bless ministers,! Houses two;— Our Britains bulwak twain; Who e'er the golden mean pursue;— Of justice, faultless fane.

#### XVII.

Oh! God our sovereigns' army bless; The army foremost keen: Its path may victory e'er trace, With glory on its wing.

#### XVIII.

Oh! God our sovereigns' navy side:—
The dread despair of foes:—
The lofty heritage, Britain's pride
May prove e'er alien's woes

#### XIX.

The navy that clean sweeps the deep, And home the hostile braves; Whose balmy breath o'er British fief, The flag of peace e'er waves.

#### XX.

The sun of commerce, wealth, Fine Arts, Under its blessing shine;
Be it eternal awe that thwarts
The crafty foes design.

#### XXI.

Our sovereigns' majesty may it, Escort, e'er as in yores; Be it the moon of might to twit, All stars of other shores.

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# XXII.

Like rainy rivers, Britain's trade May overflow the side; Unique worth, honesty it wed; As long as world may bide.

#### XXIII.

Britain, of peace, be morning lark, The lark that just at dawn, With strains of peace, floods heaven's arc,— With God's one only song.

#### XXIV.

The lark that reminds ere day begin, Ere men begin their works; The note of peace mid all chagrin The ruling note that lurks.

#### XXV.

God Save from ill our King and Queen;— Our noble sovereigns great,! What garden of peace, joy soothing, Have they their lands out laid.





